



Geronimo Stilton



















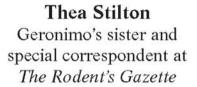








Geronimo Stilton A learned and brainy mouse; editor of The Rodent's Gazette













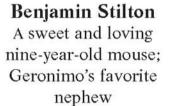








Trap Stilton An awful joker; Geronimo's cousin and owner of the store Cheap Junk for Less



















Geronimo Stilton

THE PHANTOM BANDIT



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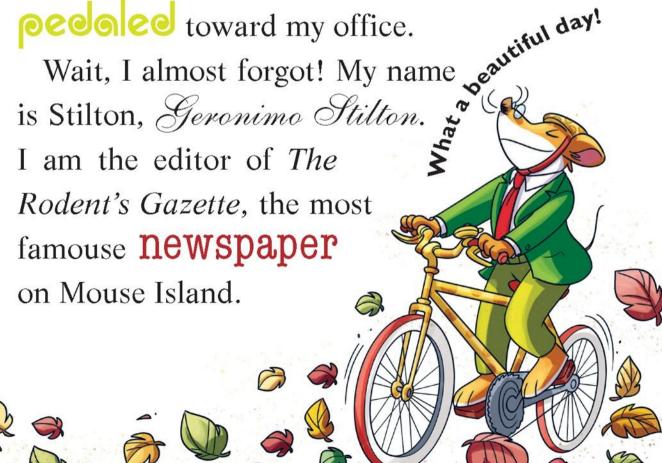
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It was a beautiful FALL morning. It had just stopped land, and my whiskers twitched at the smell of damp leaves mixed with the scent of freshly baked cheese pastries wafting from the café. I breathed in the cool, fresh air as I pedaled toward my office.







As I was saying, my dear rodent friends, I was really enjoying the **BEAUTIFUL** autumn air. I couldn't wait for the weekend. I planned to invite all my **friends** to the Stilton **farm**, out in the country. There, we could pick **CHESTNUTS** and **Toast** them around a fire.

HOW I LOVE FALL!

The leaves are so colorful, and it's the best season to eat grilled cheese!





When I reached 17 Swiss Cheese Center, I parked my bieyele in front. On the way to my office, I passed by the break room. There, MUNCHING on cheese, I saw Vanessa Vogue (the Gazette's fashion journalist); my sister, Thea; (the Gazette's special correspondent); and Cara DeColores (the graphic designer for the Gazette).

They were all whispering mysteriously,

"PSSST ... DID YOU HEAR?"

"P\$\$\$\$T . . . everyone will be there . . . P\$\$\$\$\$T . . . it will be scary, scream-worthy, a real frightfest!"



I interrupted them. "Hello, everyone!" I said. "What exactly are you saying is going to be SCARY, SCREAM-WORTHY, and frightening?"

The three rodents looked **startled** to see me.

"Why, um, we were just talking about a new article idea I just had," Vanessa answered. "About the, um, frightening new fashions in Transylmousea."

"That sounds mousetastic!" I said.
"Good luck with the article!"

They all quickly stood up.

"Thanks, Geronimo!" Thea said. "But, um, it's late and we need to get back to work!"

Then they ran off, and I was confused. Why were they in such a rush?

WHAT A STRANGE ENGOUNTER!





On the second floor, I spotted my **assistant**, Mousella, chatting with reporter Babs Bonbon.

"P\$\$\$\$T," she said in a loud whisper. "Everyone will be there . . . P\$\$\$\$T . . . it will be

scary, scream-worthy, a real frightfest!"

I interrupted them, too. "Excuse me, but what is going to be SCARY, SCREAM-WORTHY, and frightening?"

"Um, we were just talking about the new horror film, Inc 610\$1 01 Cheudal Castle," Mousella explained. "Sorry, we have to get back to work!" Then they both scurried away.

ANOTHER STRANGE ENGOUNTER!

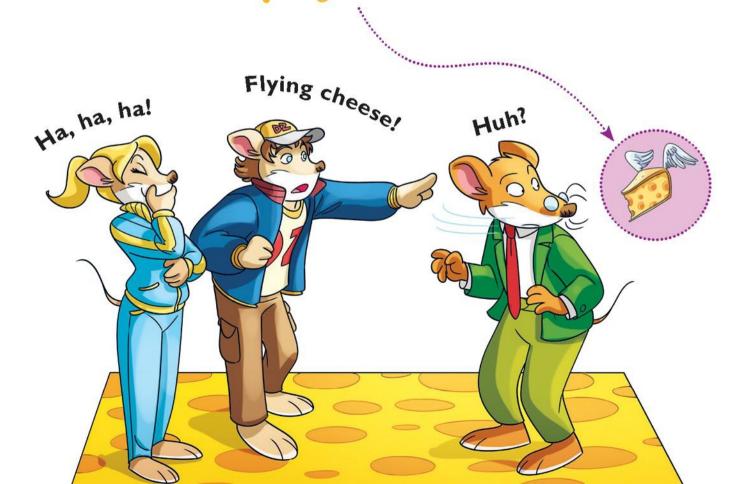
I ran into Jim Dribbles (the Gazette's

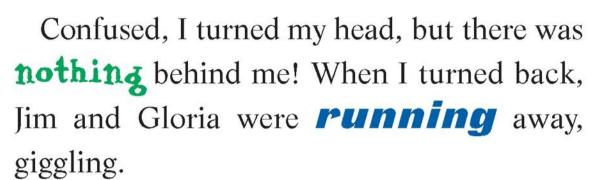
expert **Soccer** commentator) who was whispering with his sister Gloria.

"P\$\$\$\$T," Jim whispered. "Everyone will be there. P\$\$\$\$T... it will be scary, scream-worthy, and a real frightfest!"

"Excuse me, friends," I asked. "Can you PLEASE tell me what is going to be scary, scream-worthy, and frightening?"

Jim's eyes got wide, and he pointed. "That piece of flying cheese right behind you!" "What? Flying cheese?" I asked.





"GERONIMO HAS BEEN SUCCESSFULLY **DISTRACTED!**" Jim was saying to his sister. "The **Secret** has been protected! And it was will be truly SCARY, SCREAM-WORTHY, and frightening!"

How strange, I tried to follow them, but they were in much better shape than I was and I couldn't catch up.

THAT WAS MY THIRD STRANGE ENGOUNTER IN A ROW!

Jim had used the word secret. Now it was clear that my coworkers were hiding something from me. But what could it be?

I needed some fresh air to clear my head. But when I opened my office window, what I saw made my whiskers shake!

A long black car marked **Funeral Movers** was parked in front of the building.

Some rodents dressed in black were unloading **Coffin-shaped** boxes.

THIS WAS THE STRANGEST ENGOUNTER, OF THEM ALL!



I quickly ran downstairs to see what they were up to. As I passed by the cafeteria, my nose twitched. The smell of cheesy goodness wafted through the doors. But who was cooking so early?

HOW STRANGE!

I started to push open the doors, but a **furry** paw pushed me back.

"Geronimo, why are you being so nosy?"



"feeeeeek!" I squeaked.

Then I realized that it was just my cousin Trap.

"Don't call me nosy!"
I snapped. "Strange things are

happening around here, and I am the ONLY ONE who

doesn't know what's going on!"

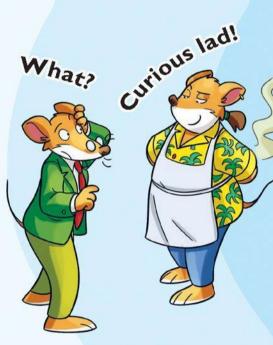
I tried to look past him, but he kept moving his body,

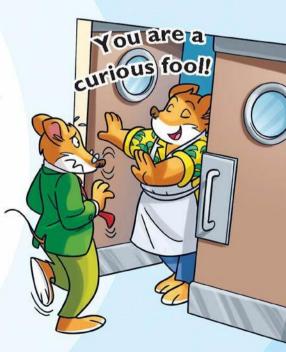
BLOCKING my

view. Then he started to tease me by singing a silly song.

"Geroni-mini is a curious ninny! Geroni-mad is a curious LAP! Geroni-mule is a curious FOOL!"









A Stress-Free Vacation!

I left Trap and ran outside to try to find out what the **gloomy** movers were doing. But there was no sign of them, or the **Coffin-shaped** boxes.

All of the **mysterious** happenings at *The Rodent's Gazette* were making me uneasy. I headed back home and saw that my **DOOR** was slightly open!

Oh no!

Was there a thief inside?

With trembling paws.

With **trembling** paws, I opened the door.

Inside my living room sat my sister, Thea; Mousita Middleton, who works at the newspaper; and my friend CREEPELLA VON CRACKLEFUR. They were whispering to one another.

"PSST ... let's get rid of him for a while," Thea was saying.

WHAT A STRANGE SCENE!



"Holey cheese!" I cried. "How did you all get in here? I almost FAINTED with fright!"

"Calm down," Thea said. "I used the spare key you gave me."

"We just came to check on you, Gerrykins," Creepella said. "Trap told us you were acting **STRANGE**."

"I'm not the one acting **STRANGE!**" I protested. "It's everyone else! Why is everyone

I'm not acting strange!

being mysterious? Everyone is whispering! And talking about scary things! And who were those Funeral Movers I saw?"

Exhausted, I plopped down on my chair.

Creepella patted my head. "Poor Gerrykins. You're very **Stressed!**"

Mousita jumped up. "I'll make you some **SOOTHING** tea!"



Creepella whispered in my ear. "You need a little stress-free vacation, Gerrykins."

"Hmm," I said. "A stress-free vacation sounds nice."

She clapped her paws together. "Perfect!" she cried. "You can come with me to Cacklefur Castle!"

Cacklefur Castle? There was nothing relaxing about that Spooling place!

"Well, actually, I can't . . ." I started to protest, but Creepella was already shouting into her phone.

"Geronimo Stilton will be coming with me to the **Estle** for a short vacation," she said. "Prepare the **best** room for him, Boneham! Yes, Geronimo, that sweet little **SCAREDY-RAT** who has a big **Chush** on me."

"Well, actually, I don't have a cr —" I



tried to explain, but Creepella had already grabbed AY PAW and was leading me outside.

Mousita gave me a **thermos** of tea, and Thea shoved a pre-packed **suitease** into my paw.

As I climbed into the car, I could swear I heard Thea whisper, "It will be SCARY, scream-worthy, and a real frightfest!"

NOT AGAIN! HOW STRANGE!

But before I could ask her any questions, Creepella's Turbotomb **Speci** away.





I Am Not a Jealous Mouse!

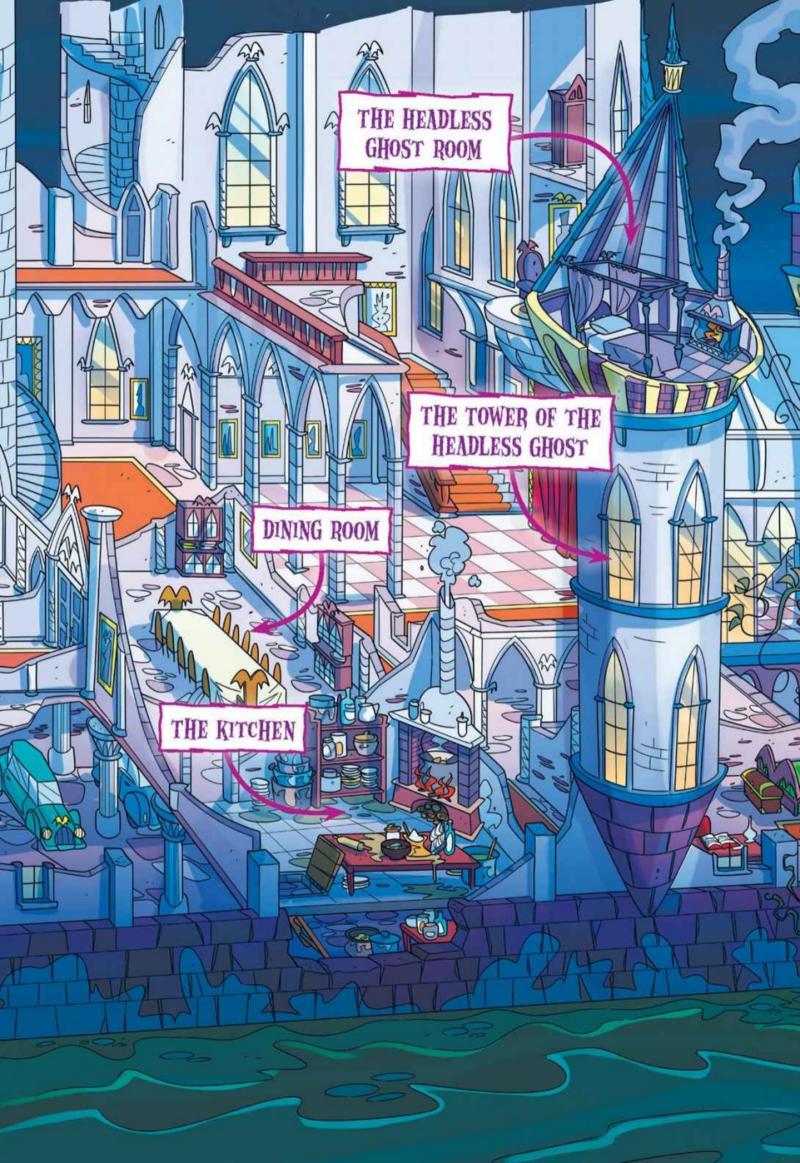
We arrived at **Cacklefur Castle** at the stroke of midnight —

the witching hour!

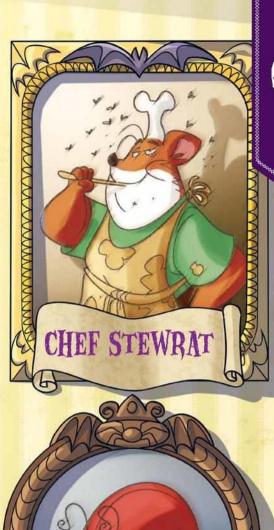
I had seen the castle many times before, but it still gave me **chills** whenever I saw it. It stood upon a **skull-shaped** hill, and its **TALL** spires extended into the **dark** sky.

To make things even creepier, a terrible STORM had broken out just as we got there. Lightning bolts flashed, boomed, and an eerie wind whistled through the spooky trees.









THE VON CACKLEFUR FAMILY















When I got out of the car I was greeted by the castle's butler, Boneham.

"Welcome, Mr. Geronimo," he said. Then he lowered his voice to a whisper. "Of all

Welcome!

the guests tonight, Thanks!

you are the nicest."

I was supprised.

I didn't know there would be other **rodents** on my stress-free vacation.

"Um, what **guests**?" I asked.

Then I noticed a rodent bending over the moat, collecting

drops of **SLIME** in a test tube. It was the famouse professor AVIII TESTETY, who had just won the Rodel Prize in Science!

He walked over to Creepella and kissed her paw. "You are truly enchanting, my dear host," he said. "Thank you for letting me study the SLIME in your moat. It will come in handy to my research on ghostly superviruses."

Creepella smiled. "I am happy to do my part to advance science!" she replied.



Then I heard Boneham whisper in my ear, "Please don't be jealous, Mr. Geronimo. Lady Creepella only has EYES for you!"
"JEALOUS? WHO. ME?" I

asked. "NO, I'M JUST A LITTLE
BIT HUNGRY."

Creepella overheard me. "Hungry? Then why don't you and I have a midnight snack of Chef Stewrat's ew, Gerrykins?"

The thought of that terrible stew made my whiskers twitch. Before I could refuse, a luxury sports car pulled up next to the Turbotomb.

A tall rodent in an elegant suit and **pupple** bow tie stepped out of the car. It was the famouse **FILM DIRECTOR**, Gaspar Ghostine!

I knew that Gaspar had won a Mouscar award for **Best Spooky Film** for his movie **The Muenster Under the Bed**. He had brought Creepella a big bouquet of purple roses. "For you, my dear," he said. "Thank you for allowing me to film my next movie, The Gorgonzola film to film my next movie, The Gorgonzola at your castle."

"How thoughtful!" Creepella exclaimed. "Boneham, please put these in a nice vase."



"All those roses! What a show-off!" I snorted.

"Please don't be **jealous**, Mr. Geronimo," Boneham repeated. "Lady Creepella only has **EYES** for you."

"JEALOUS? WHO, ME?" I replied. "NO, I'M JUST A LITTLE BIT COLD."

Creepella took my paw. "Let's go inside, Gerrykins. We can sit by the fire and warm up."

We entered the castle, where we ran into a rodent with **green fur**...



Creepella's grandfather was chatting with a **muscular** rodent wearing a gardener's apron and **ROUDD** sunglasses. His green shirt had a pattern of colorful **flowers**, and his pants were stained with **dirt**.

"Meet the new GARDENER, Felix Bloomfur," Grandpa said. "He will manage our greenhouse of Carrow Vorous plants."

Felix turned to greet us and **STARED** at Creepella, his face as red as a tomato. "C-C-Creepella von Cacklefur? Is th-th-



that really you?" he asked. "You look even more **ENCHANTING** than you do in pictures. I c-c-can't believe I'm actually MEETING you!"

"can I have your phone number? What are you doing tonight? Are you dating anyone?"

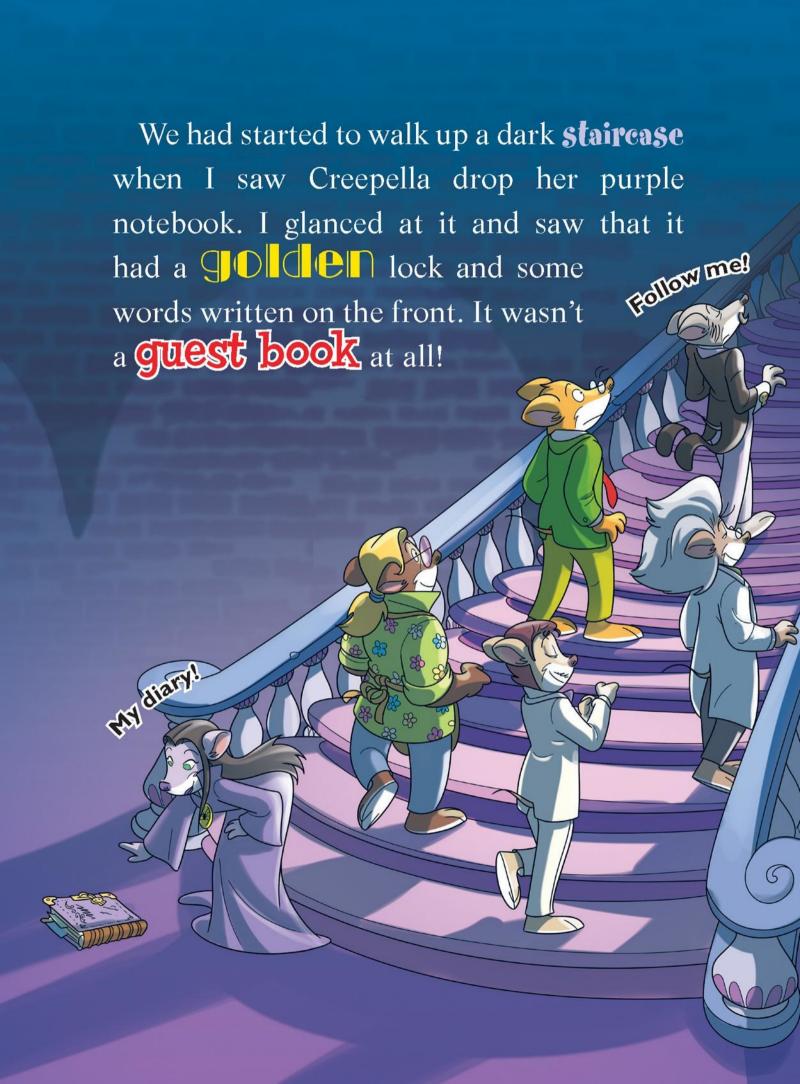
She pulled a purple notebook out of her bag. "Why don't you give me your phone number, and I'll add it to the **guest** book," she said politely. "That way I can call you one day (or maybe not)."

"HUMPH!" I snorted. How rude of Felix to ask for her phone number like that! Grandpa Frankenstein winked at me. "Don't be jealous, Geronimo," he said.

"JEALOUS? WHO, ME?" I replied. "NO, I AM JUST A LITTLE BIT TIRED FROM THE TRIP."

"Why don't you rest a little before we eat, Gerrykins?" Creepella asked.

Then Boneham appeared. "Please, guests, FOLLOW me," the butler said. "I will take you to your room."



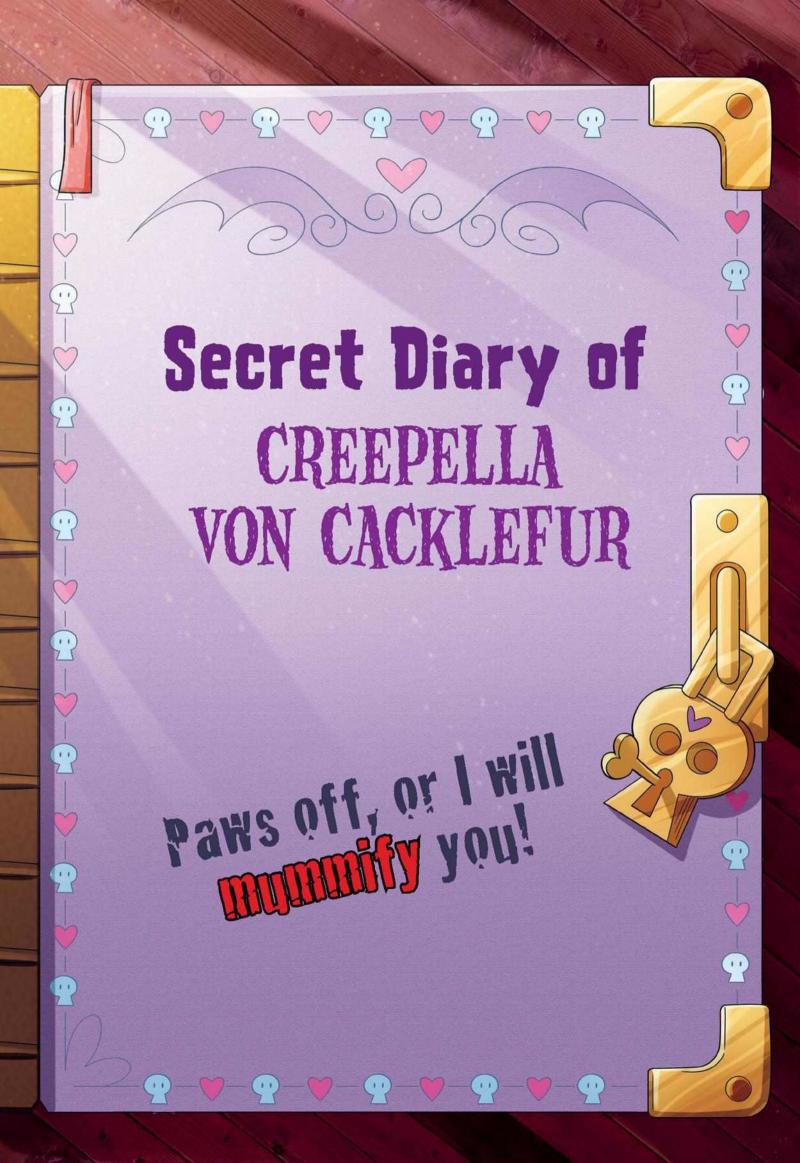
It was her secret diary!

She saw me looking at it curiously, and she smiled.

"I keep track of my **ADMIRERS** in here, and all the gifts they give me so I can send them thank-you notes," she said. "You can **LOOK** at it, but don't be jealous."

"I AM NOT A JEALOUS MOUSE!" I insisted.











THE ROOM OF THE HEADLESS GHOST

Boneham stopped at the top of the stairs.

"Mr. Geronimo, this is your room," he said. "The Room of the Headless Ghost. It is the scariest, most frightening room in the entire castle! I hope you are pleased."

"Th-th-thanks," I stammered. But I wasn't pleased. I was terrified.

The door opened with a creak. Creeeaaak!

I let out a scared squeak. Squeeeaaak!

Then I stepped inside. Eeeeeeek!



Purple satin covered the walls, which made the room look very **Sloomy**. In the center was a long canopy bed with purple sheets, and **bats** carved into the tops of the posts.

Flames danced in the marble fireplace, projecting long, eerie **SHADOMS** on the walls. They lit up a brass plaque on an old suit of armor.

ARMOR OF THE DECEASED COUNT BRAGSBY VON CACKLEFUR, KNOWN AS THE HEADLESS GHOST

Suddenly, the suit of atmot moved! I jumped back. The arm lifted and took off the helmet. I let out a terrified shriek. "Feeeeeeeek!"

"Do not be afraid,
Geronimo!" a ghostly voice
said. "I, the Readless
blost, will watch over
you as you sleep."

"Um, th-th-thanks," I stammered. "Although I do not think I will get any **Sleep** in this room!"

I had been in many spooky rooms in the castle before, and I SHOULD HAVE BEEN USED TO THIS.

I decided to walk around before our latenight dinner. I knew I would run into more ghosts, monsters, and creatures, but I had to get away from that HEADLESS HORROR!

My whiskers twitched nervously as I



walked quickly through the castle's DARK



hallways. I had a creepy feeling that I was being watched.

The **portraits** of the Cacklefur ancestors were following me with

their eyes. What a fright! I had seen them before, so I SHOULD HAVE BEEN USED TO THEM.

Then another 9008 appeared out of thin air. It was Booey the Poltergeist!

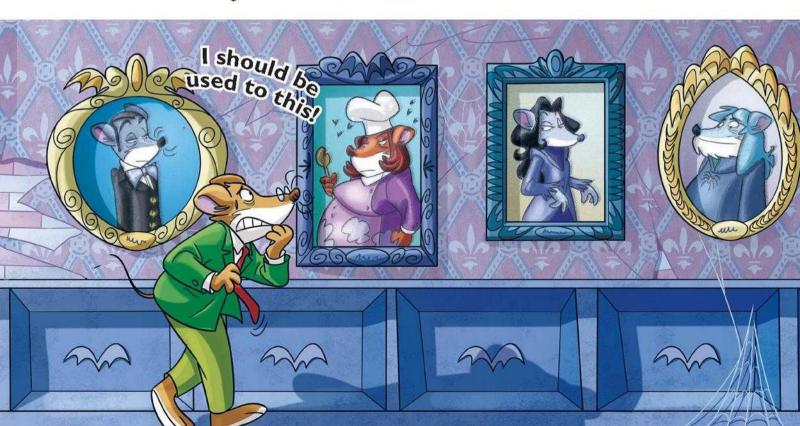


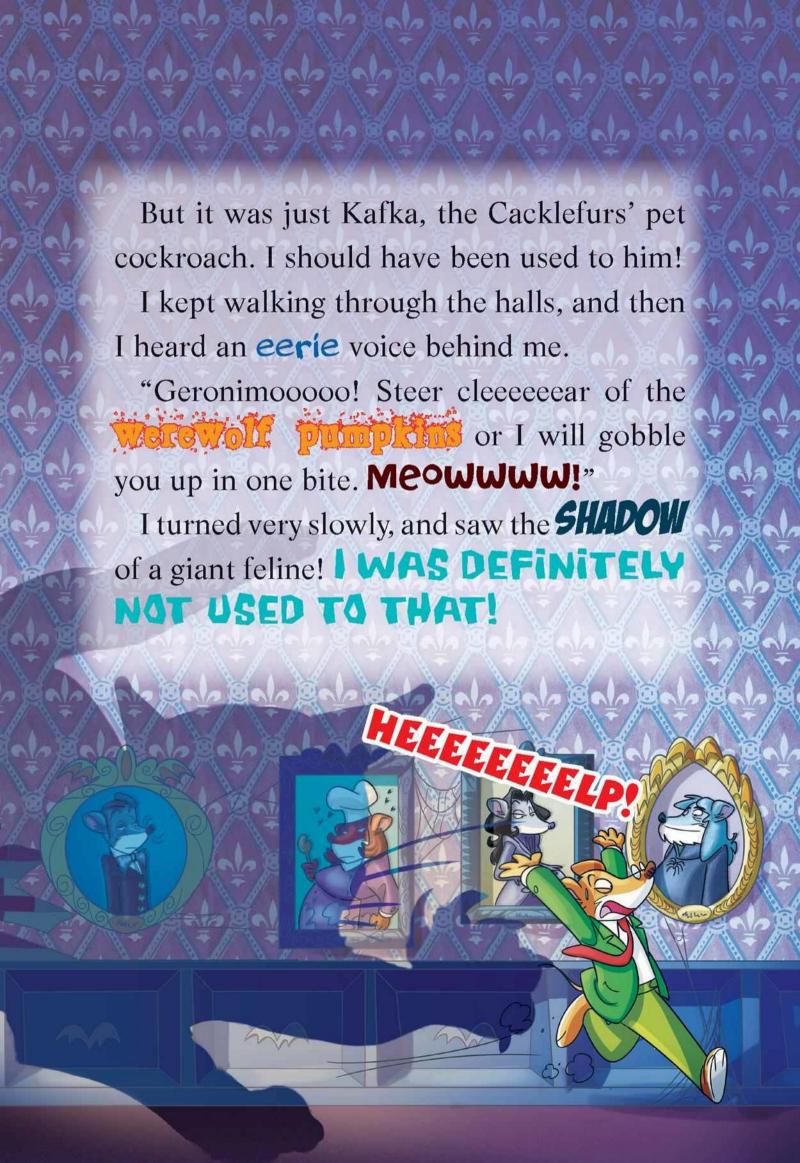
I knew Booey, and I should have been used to him, but I still **squeaked** in fright!



I heard a loud noise, and I nearly jumped out of my fur. Then I realized it was just Boneham banging the gong for dinner. I should have been used to that, but my nerves were on edge!

I kept walking, and something skittered across my foot. **Feek!**







I screamed at the top of my rodent lungs!

"Heeeeelp!" I wailed as I **ran** all the way to the dining room. Most of the other guests were already seated.

"Gerrykins, what's wrong?" Creepella asked.

"Don't tell me you're still afraid of this castle," said Boris von Cacklefur, Creepella's dad. "YOU SHOULD BE USED TO IT BY NOW!"

"I have never seen a before," I replied. "How could I be used to it?"

Creepella gasped. "A ? Are you sure?"

"Of course I'm sure!" I yelled.
"It was terrifying! Horrifying!
Eeeeeek!"

and then I fainted!



THE LEGEND OF THE WEREWOLF PUMPKINS

A stinky stench hit my nostrils and woke me up. I opened my eyes to see CHEF STEWRAT carrying a heavy CAULDRON and singing . . .



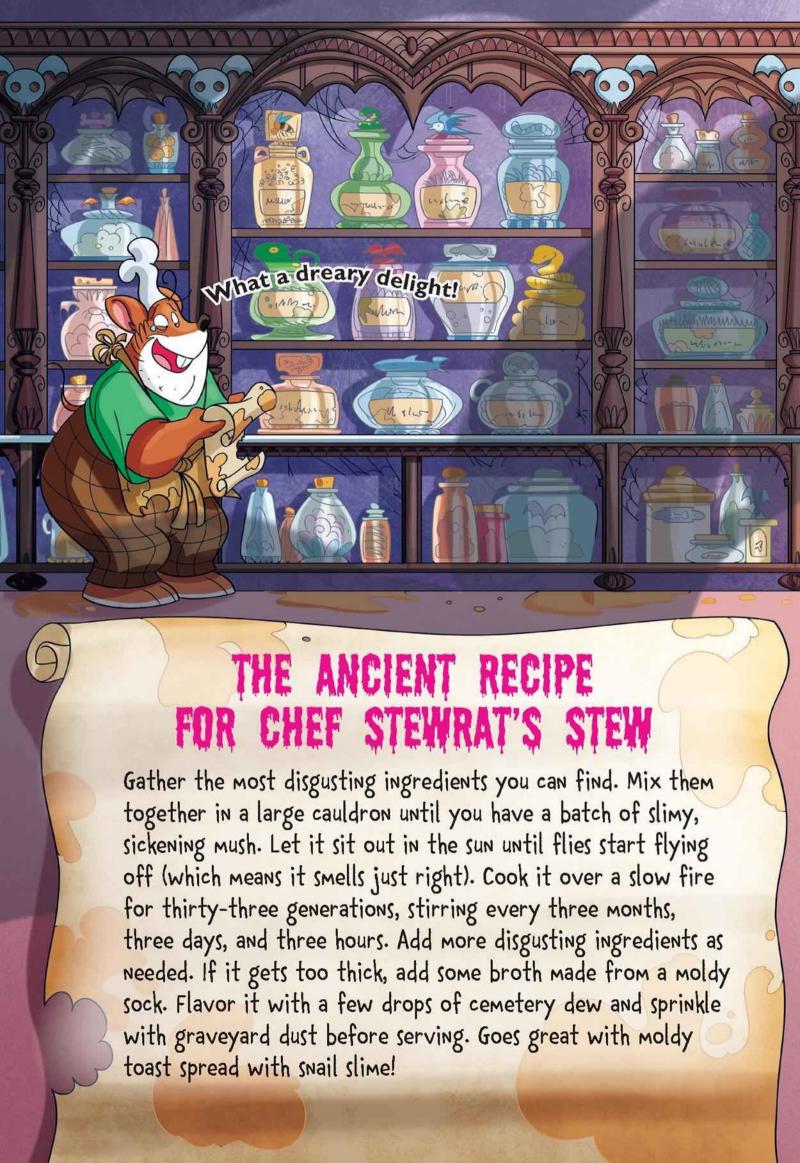
I almost **fainted** again, but Creepella fanned me with a napkin until I stopped feeling so dizzy.

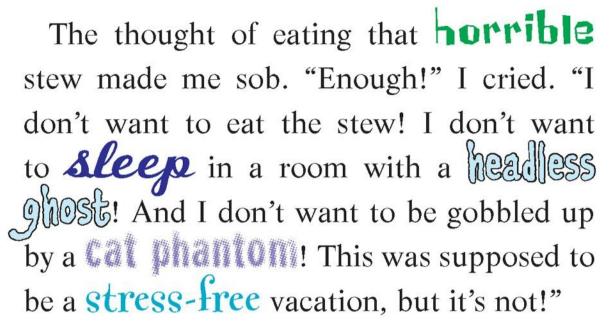
"Gerrykins, do the ingredients of the stew still turn your stomach? YOU SHOULD BE USED TO iT!" she said.

"It looks TERRIFYING," said Gaspar Ghostine with a pleased grin. "I should make a movie about it. Night of the Living Stew!"

At that moment, Felix Bloomfur came running in. "Sorry I'm late. I took a little nap." He sniffed the air. "What is that **DELICIOUS** smell?"

"It is the Cacklefur family stew," Chef Stewrat replied proudly. "It has been boiling in the same **CAULDRON** for thirty-three generations! Geronimo, have the first helping!"





Creepella's father frowned. "Geronimo, we have never seen a land land around here. Are you really sure that's what you saw?"

"I am absolutely, pawsitively sure," I replied. "It was an **ENORMOUSE** shadow with cat ears. It even meowed! And then it told me to stay away from the **WereWolf pumpkins**."

The members of the **CACKLEFUR** family looked at one another.

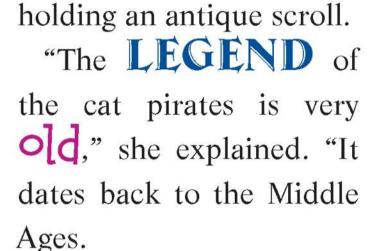
"Gerrykins, you won't believe this, but

there happens to be an ancient family legend about werewolf pumpkins and Cat pirates," Creepella said.

"Wh-wh-what?" I stammered. "What do cat pirates have to do with this?"

"I'll be **Right** Back," Creepella promised, and she returned a moment later

Here's the legend!







The Legend of the Werewolf Pumpkins

During the first great invasion of cat pirates, hordes of dangerous felines invaded all of Mouse Island.

When the cat pirates tried to invade Cacklefur Castle, they could not get past the pumpkin patch—because it was not an ordinary pumpkin patch. The pumpkins were werewolf pumpkins, and when the cat pirates attacked, they fought back.

They wrapped their tendrils around the cats, trapping them. They gnashed at the cats with their sharp teeth. Frightened, the cat pirates fled, and the castle was spared, but many werewolf pumpkins were smashed on that sad night.

The Cacklefurs have never forgotten the heroic acts of the werewolf pumpkins. They planted more pumpkins and kept the garden lovingly tended. And every year, they celebrate the werewolf pumpkins on Halloween Night.

Alvin Testerly stroked his **whiskers**. "Very interesting," he said. "I would like to examine the **dirt** in the garden to see if there are any **mutant Virus** sthat make the pumpkins so big, and so full of

"Fabumouse!" explained Gaspar Ghostine.
"Maybe it will INSPIRE my next film!"

Boris nodded. "Excellent. Let us visit the garden after dinner."

"Just don't forget about my **DELICIOUS** dessert," added Chef Stewrat.



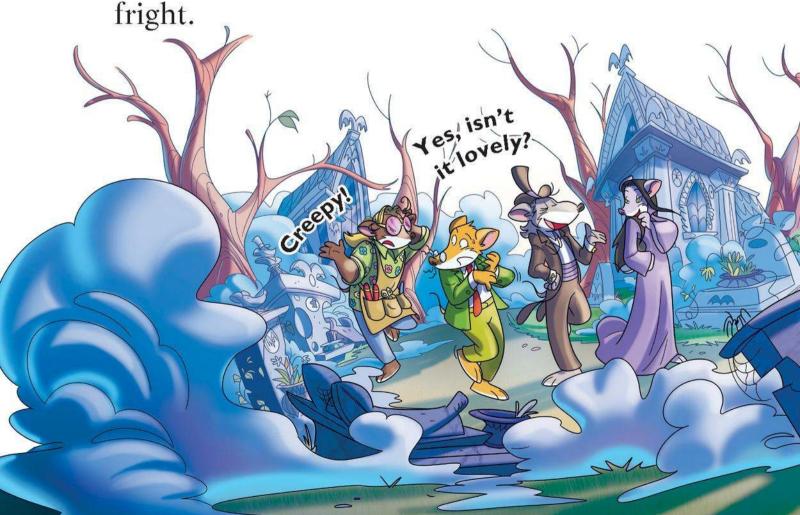




It was almost dawn when we walked to the Werewolf Pumpkin Garden.

To get there, we had to pass through the Cacklefur family **Cemetery**.

As we walked among the **gloomy** tombstones, my whiskers **trembled** in



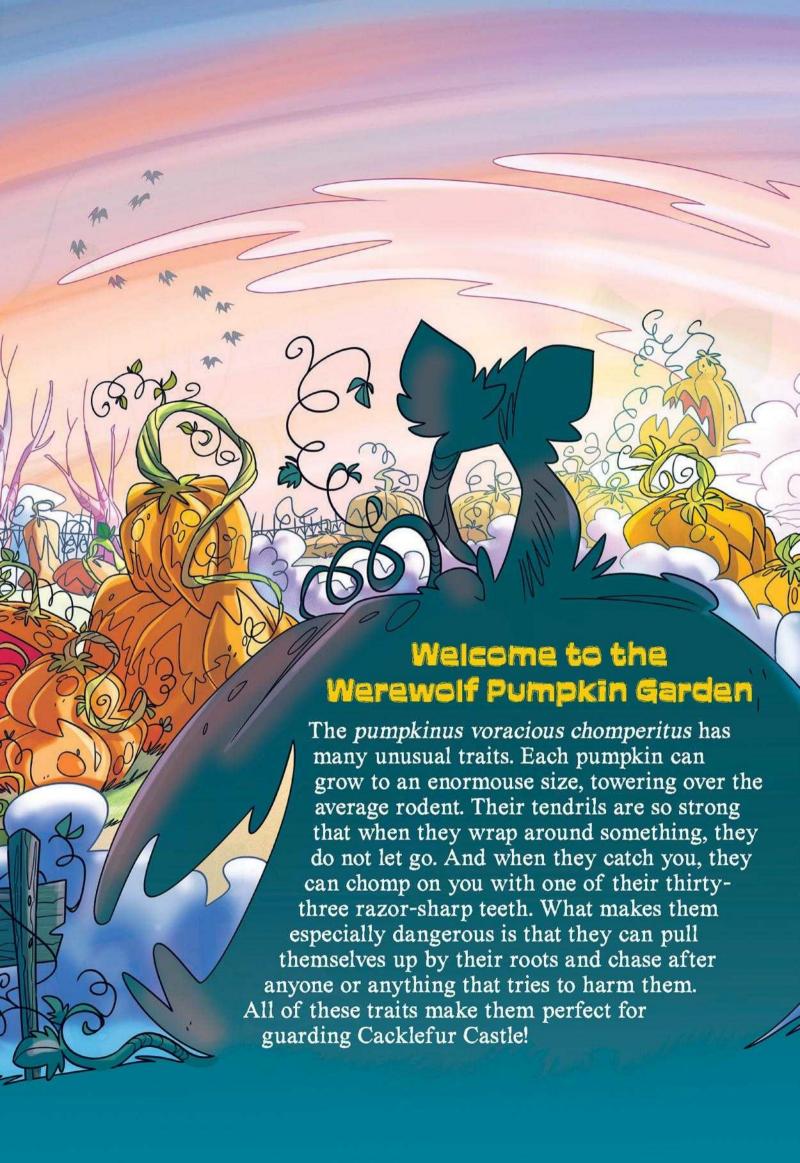
Boris laughed. "The pumpkins rather like the tombstones. They keep one another company. Ha, ha, ha!"

"What's the **SCIENTIFIC** classification of the pumpkins?" asked Felix Bloomfur.

"They are an interesting and **rare** species," Boris replied. "Pumpkinus voracious chomperitus."







"I believe I have heard of the *pumpkinus* voracious chomperitus," Felix said. "Is it true that they have teeth?"

Boris grinned. "Yes," he replied. "Lots of them!"

We walked up to a tall iron **gate** that opened into a garden filled with **HIGE** pumpkins. They were all bigger than we were. It was an **IMPLESSIVE** sight!

"It's a shame such big pumpkins only grow here," Felix remarked. "Have you ever thought about Selling them?"

"Of course not!" Creepella replied. "These pumpkins are special. They saved the Cacklefur family. We will never sell them!"

"Besides, they are too **dangerous**," Boris added. "Ordinary gardeners would not know how to control them."

Creepella opened the gate.

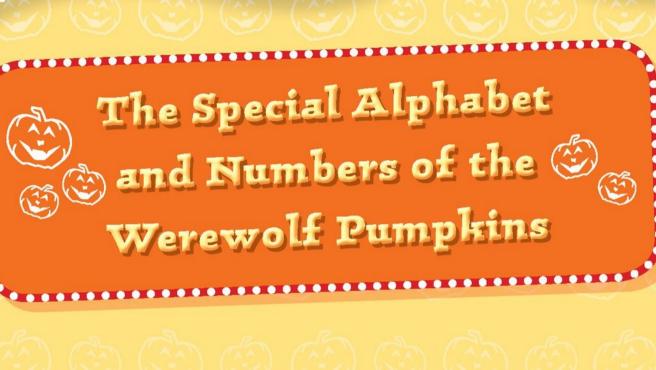
"Stay back!" she warned us. "The pumpkins will BITE anyone who isn't a Cacklefur."

She approached one of the pumpkins and **hugged** it. "It's all right, my treasure. Nobody here will harm you."

She turned to us. "The pumpkins are very intelligent. They can understand what we say. And they can communicate using a special alphabet."



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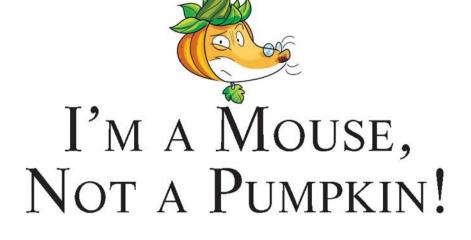








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The **SU** had already risen when we returned to the castle.

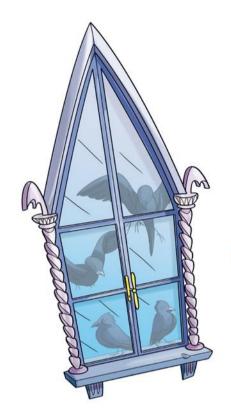
"I'm dead tired," Creepella announced.



"Everyone to bed, and gloomy dreams to all!"

I returned to my room and was so fired that I didn't care how spooky it was. I pulled the covers over me and tried to sleep.

But I couldn't sleep! First of all,



Then some Crows landed outside my window and began to caw.

CAAAW!

CAAAW!

Finally, my eyes drooped.

I fell into a **DEEP SLEEP** and began to snore even louder than the Headless Ghost.

I wasn't asleep for long when another sound woke me up. CREEEEEAK!

Someone had opened my door!

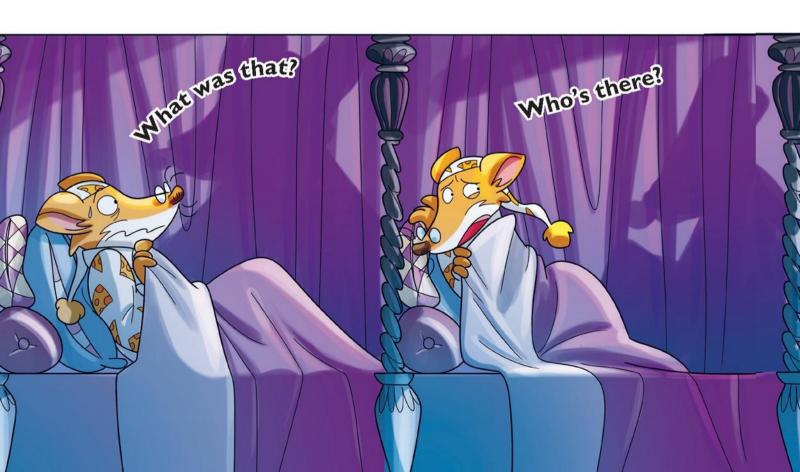
"WH-WH-WHO'S THERE?" I

stammered, but no one answered.

Then I heard footsteps walking toward my bed. Tap, tap, tap!

"Pssssst! Mr. Geronimooooooo!"

I curled up into a terrified ball. Squeeeak!



Then I heard a GHOSTLY voice whisper, "Pssst! Mr. Geronimooo!"

Frozen in fright, I watched as a tall **SIGUUM** moved across the curtains of the bed.

"HEEEELP!" I yelled. "It's the Cat Phantom!"

"Nonsense, Mr. Geronimo," the shadow said. "It is I, Boneham. The sun is setting. Time to wake up!"

I groaned. This stunk worse than the



stinkiest cheese! "But I only just fell asleep!" I moaned. "I want to go back to bed!"

"MISS CREEPELLA is waiting for you, and it is not a good idea to make her **Wait** too long. Now eat your breakfast."

Boneham set a tray of **DISGUSTING** breakfast food before me. Stew tea, fresh-squeezed stew juice, a yogurt-and-stew smoothie, and a croissant filled with stew.





I skipped breakfast and I went to see Creepella, yawning.

"Wake up, Gerrykins!" Creepella said cheerfully. "I have a hunch about the land. I think he might want to Steal the werewolf pumpkins. Are you listening?"

But I had dozed off, hugging a statue.

Z-z-z-z-z-

"Waaaaake uuuup!" Creepella yelled.

My eyes flew open. "I'm awake. Full of pep and energy! Yawn . . ."

She handed me an **orange** costume. "Put this on," she insisted.

It was a **WereWolf pumpkin** costume!

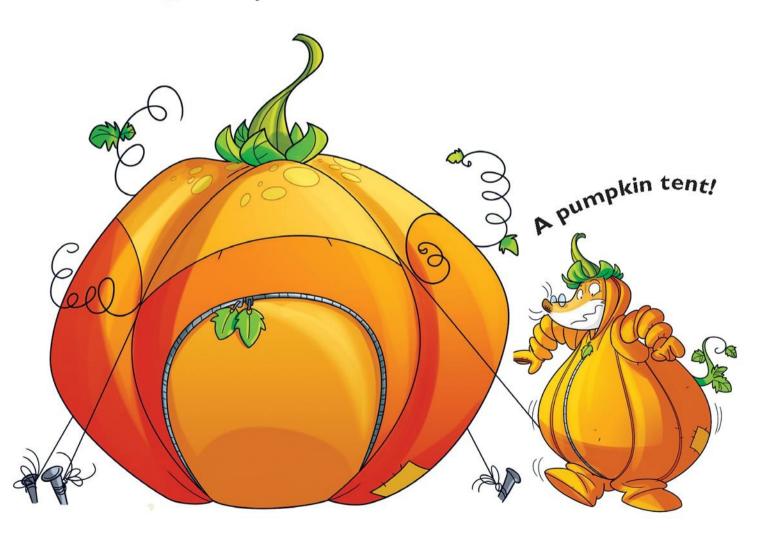
"I can't go around looking like this!" I protested. "I'M A MOUSE, NOT A PUMPKIN!"

"There are three reasons you need to wear this," Creepella said.

- The werewolf pumpkins will think you are one of them and won't bite you.
- The Cat Phantom will think you are a pumpkin, not a mouse.
- (53) You will look totally adorable!

"You want me to wait for the to show up?" I asked as I put on the costume, terrified.

"Yes," Creepella replied. "I even got you a pumpkin tent so you will be comfortable on your stakeout. Good luck, Gerrykins!"

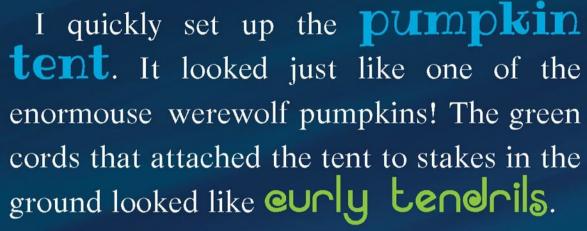




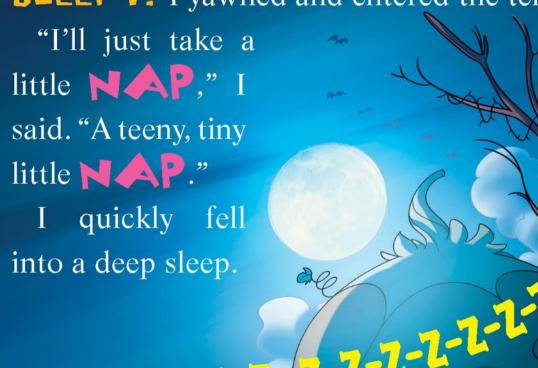
My whiskers **trembled** in fright as I tiptoed into the garden. The werewolf pumpkins didn't try to bite me.

GREAT GORGONZOLA, WAS I HAPPY TO BE WEARING THAT SILLY GOSTUME!





I settled in to wait. The sun had set, and the MOON shone overhead. I WAS SO SLEEPY! I yawned and entered the tent.



I **snored** and **snored** late into the night. Then a noise startled me.

BOOOIIIING! BOOOIIIING!

Someone (or something?) had tripped over the cords of the pumpkin tent! I jumped out of the tent.

"Who's there?" I squeaked.

Shaking like a tub of cottage cheese, and with my fur standing on end, I peeked out of the tent. The mom lit up the night sky, as round and pale as a ball of mozzarella.

Then I saw it. The shadow of a large cat, swiftly moving through the garden.



I stammered.

The had tripped on the strings of the pumpkin tent! And now he had HEARD me and was coming toward me!

I quickly rolled up into a ball and tried to **hide** among the werewolf pumpkins.



I held my breath, hoping that the would think I was just another pumpkin. I watched as the cat SHADOW came closer and closer. He stopped and around. But he didn't find me!

Great Gouda, was I happy to be wearing Creepella's pumpkin costume!

Then I realized something. The Cat Phantom was holding a big pair of pruning shears in his paws — those big scissors used by gardeners. I could see them sparkling in the moonlight.

Creepella was right! That Cat Phantom was going to cut the stalks of the werewolf pumpkins and **steal** them!

What could I do?



They attacked the Cat Phantom and bit his tail! He let out a loud . . .

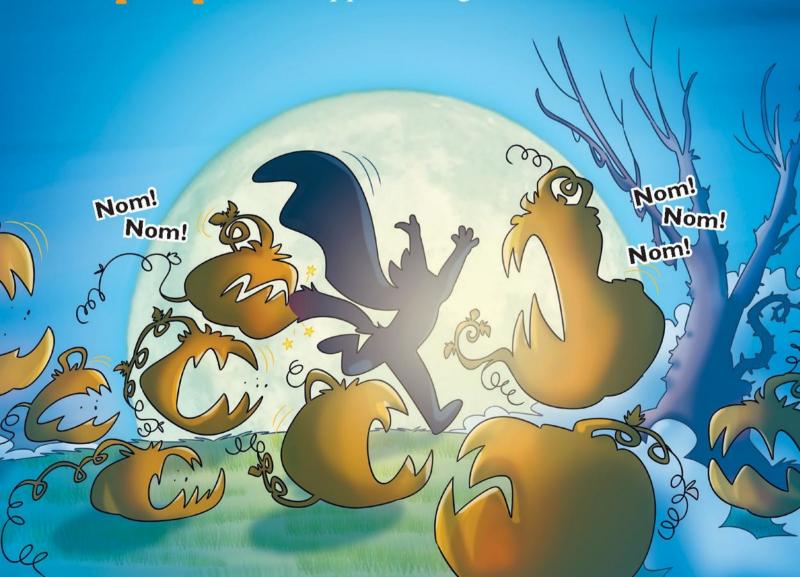
SQUEEEEEEEEEAK. SQUEEEEEEEEAK. OUCH!



I gasped.

GATS DON'T SAY "SQUEAK"! AND GHOSTS DON'T YELL "OUGH"!

Was this Collow Fully a cat? Was it really a phantom? Whatever he was, he ran out of the garden as the WereWolf pumpkins hopped along after him.



You're safe.



I slowly approached the pumpkins. Luckily, none of them had been hurt.

1. I gently **patted** them. "It's all right. You're safe now," I said. They moved their **leaves** to answer

me with the pumpkin alphabet. "Thanks, Geronimo."

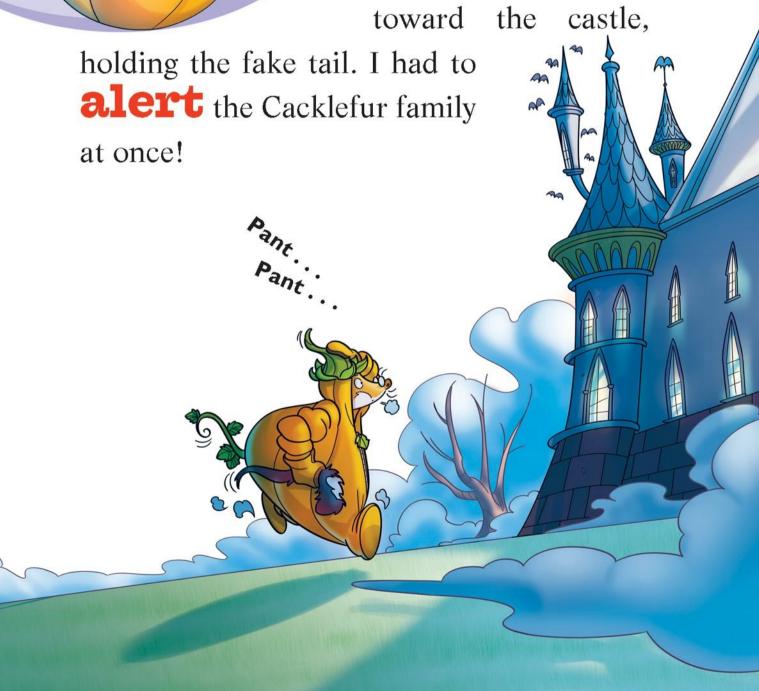
2. Then I spotted something on the ground. That something

was a furry fake cat tail! It had a BITE from one of the werewolf pumpkins!





3. Holey cheese, it was a **CLUE!** This was **Proof** that the thief was neither a nor a ! I **ran**





When I reached the castle, Boneham was banging the gong to call everyone to midnight dinner.

G00000000NG!

"Creepella!" I yelled.

Look!

She ran up to me. "Gerrykins, what is it?

Tell me everything," she said.

She pulled me aside so we could talk without being **overheard**. I told her what had happened and showed her the fake cat tail

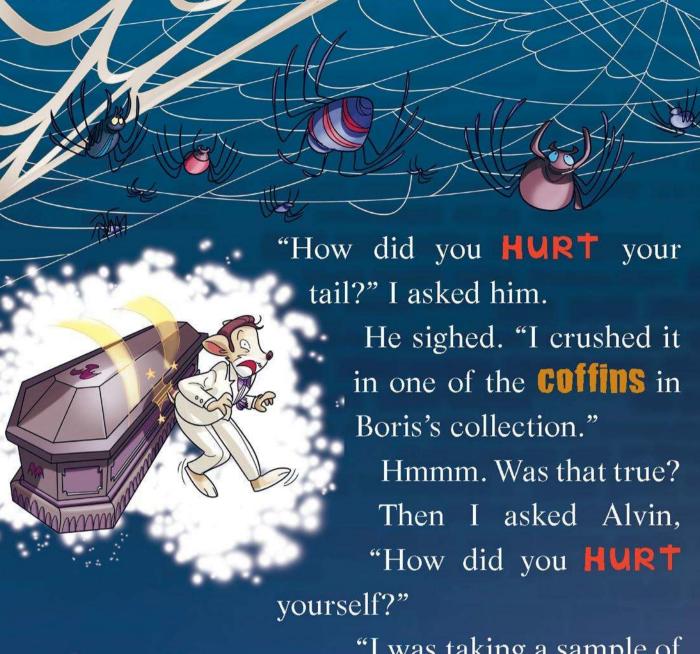
with the bite taken out of it.

"This proves that the Col Middle isn't real," I said. "It is probably one of the quests!"

"You're right," Creepella agreed. "But which one? You won't believe this, but all three guests showed up to dinner with BANDAGED tails. Which one of them was bitten by a WereWolf pumpkins?" "Let's interrogate them!" I suggested.

I approached GASPAR.







"I was taking a sample of SLIME from the piranha pond when one of them jumped up and bit me!" he answered.

Hmmm. Was that true?

Finally, I turned to Felix Bloomfur. "What



happened to you?" I asked.

"Well, I was walking through the **greenhouse** when I was attacked by some

carnivorous strawberries,"

he replied.

Hmmm. Was that true?

"One of them has to be LYING," I said.

Creepella nodded. "You're right," she said. "But I have a thought: Whoever is the COSTUME to get to the dining room in time. Maybe the thief left the PROOF in his room!"

"Brilliant!" I said. "Let's go check the rooms."



We walked up the Tower of the Medless flost and entered Alvin Testerly's room. The floor was tracked with muddy foot prints!

"Does this **Prove** that Alvin was in the **pumpkin garden**?" I asked.

Creepella shook her head. "Alvin is always in the mud looking for Mutant viruses," she said. "That doesn't mean it was him."

We investigated Gaspar Ghostine's room





next and saw that he had a Willie Globs hanging from the coat rack — just like the one worn by the !

"Maybe it was Gaspar I saw in the pumpkin garden!" I exclaimed.

Creepella sighed. "That doesn't **Prove** anything for sure. Gaspar is filming a movie here about a **MOSE**. This could be one of his costumes."



Finally, we **CHECKED OUT** Felix Bloomfur's room. Right away, we spotted a pair of pruning shears on the floor!

"Look!" I cried. "The Cold Michilally had a pair just like this!"

Creepella shook her head. "But Felix is a GARDENER. He always uses pruning shears. It doesn't mean he's guilty!"

"Moldy mozzarella, this is frustrating!" I exclaimed.



"You're right," Creepella agreed. "There must be a way to tell the **REAL THIEF** from the other guests."

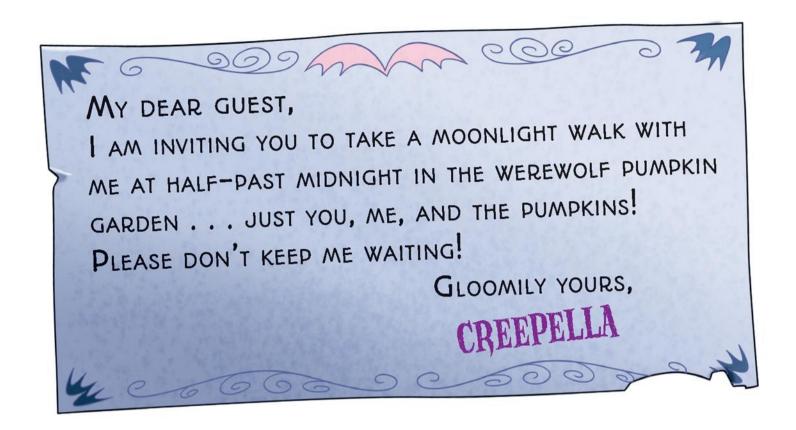
Then an IDEA hit me like a bolt of lightning. "Creepella,

HELP," I said. "Write a note to each of your admirers, and ask them to take a MOONLIGHT walk with you in the garden of the werewolf pumpkins."

She looked confused. "How will this help us **figure out** who the thief is, Gerrykins?"

"You'll see," I promised. "TRUST

So Creepella wrote **THREE NOTES**, and slipped one under the door of each guest's room.



Then we **ran** to the garden, and Creepella warned the pumpkins, "Don't move until I say so!"

"Why don't you wait here, by the **pumpkin tent**," I suggested, "and I will hide here among the pumpkins. If my plan works, we will find out who the guilty one is!"

We waited. First, Alvin Testerly appeared on the path. He stepped toward Creepella.

"Oh, Creepella! What a **romantic** note you sent," he whispered.

Then . . . •• • ! He TRIPPED on one of the cords of the pumpkin tent and landed right on his snout.

BOOOIIING!

"He isn't the fake phantom," I told Creepella.

Then Gaspar Ghostine came.

"Beautiful Creepella!" he exclaimed. "My heart aches for you like . . ."

Oot He tripped on a cord and landed right on his snout next to Alvin.

BOOOIIING!

BOOOMING "He isn't the guilty one, either," I said. "It can only be one **rat**!" Felix Bloomfur **ran** into the garden.

Heeeeelp!



"I'm here, Creepella!" he cried, and he jumped right over the cord of the pumpkin tent — he knew it was there!

I jumped up out of my **hiding place** between the pumpkins

and pointed to him. "There he is! HE'S THE FAKE PHANTOM! IT'S FELIX BLOOMFUR!"

"Werewolf pumpkins, get him!" Creepella commanded.

The pumpkins hopped after him and wrapped their vines around him. Then they showed him their sharp teeth.

NOM, NOM, NOM!

"Galloping ghosts, just admit you did it, Felix!" Creepella said.

"Yes, it was me! I admit it!" Felix yelled. "Now please tell the **WereWolf pumpkins** not to bite my tail!"

"I will call them off, but you must tell the truth!" Creepella insisted.



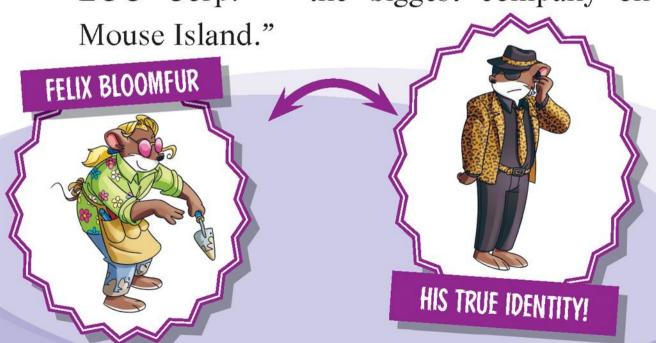


A RODENT IN DISGUISE!

Then **FELIX BLOOMFUR** did something surprising. He took off his blond wig and his mirrored sunglasses. He put on a pair of dark sunglasses. I recognized him right away.

"I remember you! You are one of Madame No's bodyguards!" I cried.

"It's true," he confessed. "I work for **Madame No**, the Mega Director of EGO Corp. — the biggest company on



"I am a **Plant** expert," Felix continued.

"I took the bodyguard job to pay for my plant experiments. When **Madame**No learned of my skills, she gave me this mission."

"What exactly does that GREEDY RODENT want?" I asked.

"She knows that *pumpkinus voracious* chomperitus only grows in the Cacklefur **garden**," Felix replied. "Madame No asked

me to **Steal** them so she could sell them to others for a **high price**. I got

a costume to scare
you away and keep
you off my trail."

Madame No!

Madame No is the Mega Director of the EGO: the Enormousely Giant Organization. This powerful company delves into many kinds of business, both honest and shady. Ask her a question, and she has only one answer: "Mod"









Felix turned to me. "How did you **KNOW** it was me?"

- "The night I slept in the garden, the tripped on the cords of the tent," I explained.
- "I knew that one of the three guests was guilty, but I didn't know who!
- 3 "I made sure each guest had to PASS the tent.
- "You didn't trip because you remembered where the cords were, so I knew you had to be the guilty one!"

Creepella hugged me. "Gerrykins, **you did it!**"

Felix frowned. "What will happen to me?"

Oh, Creepella!

"You will go back to **Madame No**," Creepella said firmly, "and bring her this message: If you cross the Cacklefur family again, you will get your tail bitten!"

Then she clapped her paws and the WereWolf pumpkins released Felix. He fell to his knees.

"Oh, Creepella, I know I **Lied**, but my feelings for you are real," he said.

"That doesn't matter!" Creepella cried. "You are nothing but a liar and a thief, and you work for a rodent with a heart more

rotten than the moldiest cheese. You do not deserve to be on my LIST of admirers!"

She took her diary from her pocket,



Bloomfur's picture.

"NOOOOOO!" he wailed, and then he burst into tears.

"Sorry, Felix," she said. "YOU SHOULD NEVER MESS WITH A CACKLEFUR!"

Then we walked back to the EEE ... leaving Felix behind. Overhead, the sky turned pink with the morning sunrise.

Creepella immediately jumped into her

Turbotomb. "Hop in, Gerrykins!" she said. "Now we can go back to New Mouse City. There's a surprise for you there."

"Surprise?" I asked.

She nodded. "That's why I brought you here. So you wouldn't find out."

"What kind of surprise?" I asked anxiously.

She smiled. "You'll find out **TONIGHT** at *The Rodent's Gazette*, at **midnight**, sharp!"



HAPPY NIGHT OF THE WEREWOLF PUMPKINS!

Creepella brought me to *The Rodent's*Gazette at **midnight** on the dot.

New Mouse City was **Spooky** at night! I opened the door to the office . . . and saw a room full of **MONSTERS**!









"HEEEEELP!" I yelled, and then I fainted.

When I came to, Benjamin was fanning me with the hem of his 900st costume.

"It's okay, Uncle G," he said. "We surprised you! We put together a HALLOWEEN PARTY right here at The Rodent's Gazette! It was Creepella's idea. Do you like it?"

"Y-y-yes," I stammered. I couldn't believe all the **effort** everyone had put into the party!

There was **coffin-shaped** furniture, which must be what those strange rodents in **BLACK** had delivered. All kinds of Halloween-themed food covered a very long table. That must have been what **TRAP** was preparing in the kitchen that he didn't want me to see.

The result was truly mousetastic!



But the **best thing** was that my friends, family, and coworkers were there. Creepella's family came, and so did her admirers!

She introduced them to me, one by one. "Geronimo, you already know Alvin and Gaspar," she began. "But here is Baron von Slick, Byron Novello, Count Sylvania . . . "

My head began to spin. Holey cheese, how many admirers did she have?

Luckily, Thea and Mousita pulled me away. "Ger, there's a Halloween costume for you, too," Thea said. "A Werewolf pumpkin costume!"

"Enough!" I protested. "I'M A MOUSE, NOT A PUMPKIN!"

"But, Geronimo, we made it especially for you," Mousita said.

"CREEPELLA suggested it," Thea said. "She





said you make an adorable pumpkin."

I sighed and put on the costume. After all, it was Halloween!

Then I heard Creepella's voice. "Thrills and chills, let's get this party started!" she said. "It will be scary, scream-worthy, a real frightfest!"



"HOORAY FOR THE NIGHT OF THE WEREWOLF PUMPKINS!"

everyone cheered.

Then the bandleader announced, "Now it's time for the Candle

Waltz! Who's ready to dance?"



Creepella approached me. "Gerrykins, this is my favorite waltz. Will you dance with me?"

I coughed. "Well, actually, I'm not much of a dancer."

She smiled. "I understand," she said. Then she raised her voice. "Who would like to dance with me?"

All her admirers raised their paws.









"Um, wait!" I said quickly. "I can give it a try. It's just one little **Waltz**, right?"

CREEPELLA took my paw in hers, and we walked out onto the dance floor. "Let's get waltzing, Gerrykins!" she said.

I was a little nervous, but I just followed the **music**. Soon Creepella and I were **spinning** around the dance floor with the other party guests.

"It's so nice to dance with a good friend," Creepella said with a sigh.

I had to admit, I was having a really good time, even though the room was decorated with spooky stuff. The whole room was filled with laughter and music.



Maybe we will celebrate this day every year!

That is the word of Stilton, Geronimo Stilton.



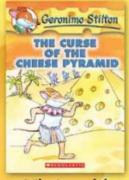
UNTIL THE NEXT ADVENTURE!



Be sure to read all my fabumouse adventures!



#1 Lost Treasure of the Emerald Eye



#2 The Curse of the Cheese Pyramid



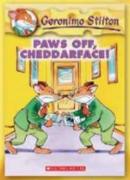
#3 Cat and Mouse in a Haunted House



#4 I'm Too Fond of My Fur!



#5 Four Mice Deep in the Jungle



#6 Paws Off, Cheddarface!



#7 Red Pizzas for a Blue Count



#8 Attack of the Bandit Cats



#9 A Fabumouse Vacation for Geronimo



#10 All Because of a Cup of Coffee



#11 It's Halloween, You 'Fraidy Mouse!



#12 Merry Christmas, Geronimo!



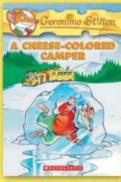
#13 The Phantom of the Subway



#14 The Temple of the Ruby of Fire



#15 The Mona Mousa Code



#16 A Cheese-Colored
Camper



#17 Watch Your Whiskers, Stilton!



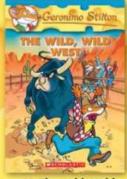
#18 Shipwreck on the Pirate Islands



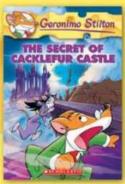
#19 My Name Is Stilton, Geronimo Stilton



#20 Surf's Up, Geronimo!



#21 The Wild, Wild West



#22 The Secret
of Cacklefur Castle



A Christmas Tale



#23 Valentine's Day Disaster



#24 Field Trip to Niagara Falls



#25 The Search for Sunken Treasure



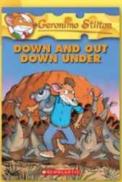
#26 The Mummy with No Name



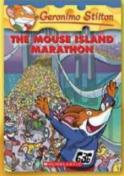
#27 The Christmas Toy Factory



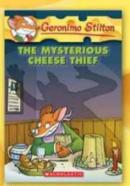
#28 Wedding Crasher



#29 Down and Out Down Under



#30 The Mouse Island Marathon



#31 The Mysterious Cheese Thief



Christmas Catastrophe



#32 Valley of the Giant Skeletons



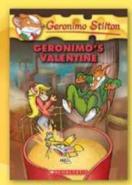
#33 Geronimo and the Gold Medal Mystery



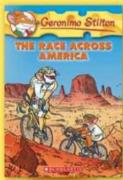
#34 Geronimo Stilton, Secret Agent



#35 A Very Merry Christmas



#36 Geronimo's Valentine



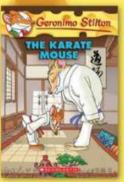
#37 The Race Across America



#38 A Fabumouse School Adventure



#39 Singing Sensation



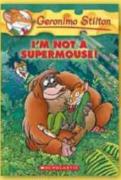
#40 The Karate Mouse



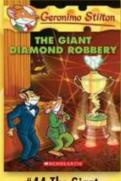
#41 Mighty Mount Kilimanjaro



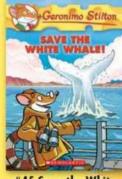
#42 The Peculiar Pumpkin Thief



#43 I'm Not a Supermouse!



#44 The Giant Diamond Robbery



#45 Save the White Whale!



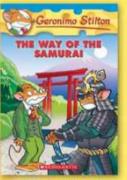
#46 The Haunted Castle



#47 Run for the Hills, Geronimo!



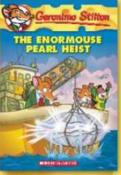
#48 The Mystery in Venice



#49 The Way of the Samurai



#50 This Hotel Is Haunted!



#51 The Enormouse Pearl Heist



#52 Mouse in Space!



#53 Rumble in the Jungle



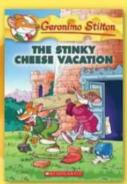
#54 Get into Gear, Stilton!



#55 The Golden Statue Plot



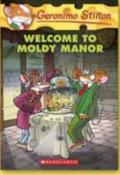
#56 Flight of the Red Bandit



#57 The Stinky Cheese Vacation



#58 The Super Chef Contest



#59 Welcome to Moldy Manor



#60 The Treasure of Easter Island



#61 Mouse House Hunter



#62 Mouse Overboard!



#63 The Cheese Experiment



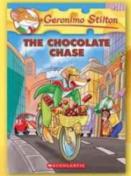
#64 Magical Mission



#65 Bollywood Burglary



#66 Operation: Secret Recipe



#67 The Chocolate Chase



#68 Cyber-Thief Showdown



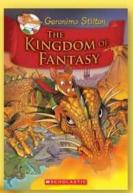
#69 Hug a Tree, Geronimo



#70 The Phantom Bandit



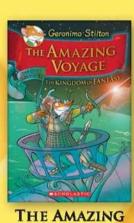
Don't miss
any of my
adventures in
the Kingdom of
Fantasy!



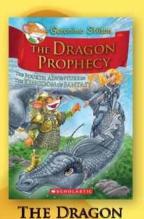
THE KINGDOM OF FANTASY



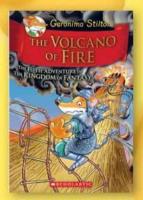
THE QUEST FOR PARADISE:
THE RETURN TO THE KINGDOM OF FANTASY



VOYAGE: THE THIRD ADVENTURE IN THE KINGDOM OF FANTASY



PROPHECY:
THE FOURTH ADVENTURE
IN THE KINGDOM
OF FANTASY



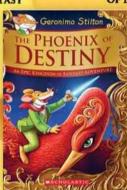
THE VOLCANO
OF FIRE:
THE FIFTH ADVENTURE
IN THE KINGDOM
OF FANTASY



THE SEARCH
FOR TREASURE:
THE SIXTH ADVENTURE
IN THE KINGDOM
OF FANTASY



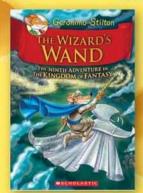
THE ENCHANTED
CHARMS:
THE SEVENTH ADVENTURE
IN THE KINGDOM
OF FANTASY



THE PHOENIX
OF DESTINY:
AN EPIC KINGDOM OF
FANTASY ADVENTURE



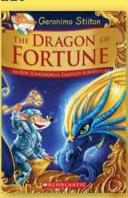
THE HOUR OF
MAGIC:
THE EIGHTH ADVENTURE
IN THE KINGDOM
OF FANTASY



THE WIZARD'S
WAND:
THE NINTH ADVENTURE
IN THE KINGDOM
OF FANTASY



THE SHIP OF SECRETS: THE TENTH ADVENTURE IN THE KINGDOM OF FANTASY



THE DRAGON
OF FORTUNE:
AN EPIC KINGDOM OF
FANTASY ADVENTURE



THE GUARDIAN
OF THE REALM:
THE ELEVENTH ADVENTURE
IN THE KINGDOM
OF FANTASY

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



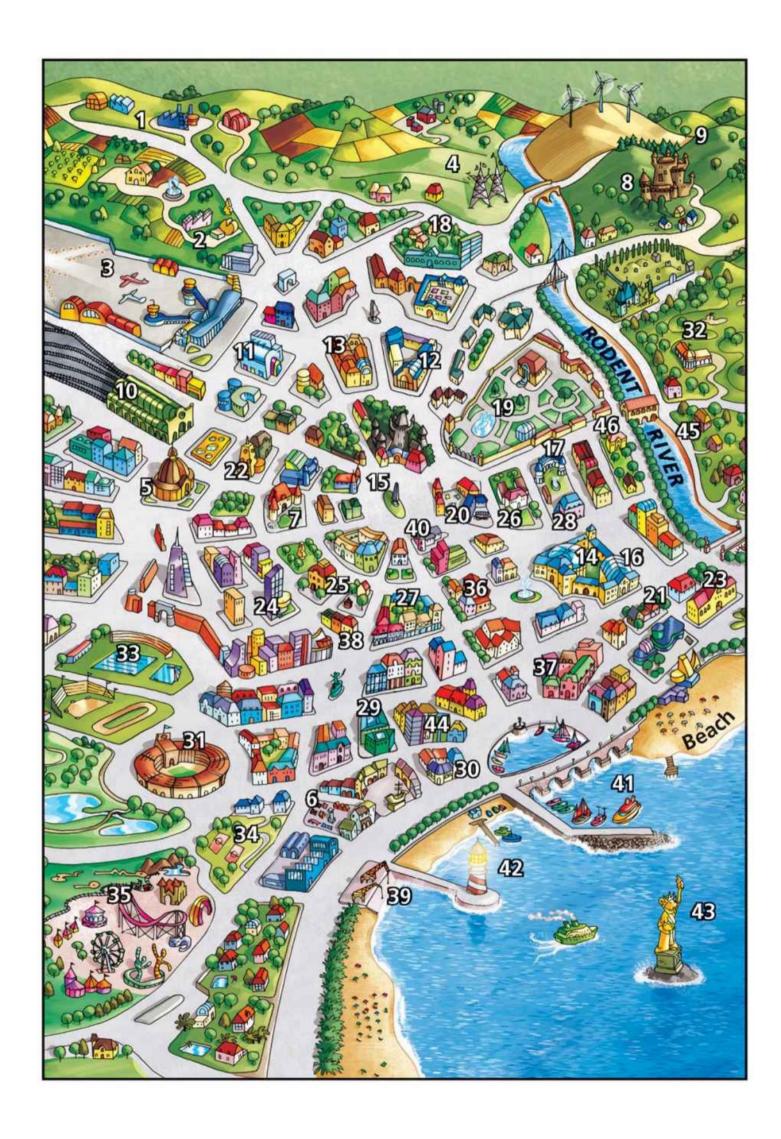
Born in New Mouse City, Mouse Island, **GERONIMO STILTON** is Rattus Emeritus of Mousomorphic Literature and of Neo-Ratonic Comparative Philosophy. For the past twenty years, he has been

running *The Rodent's Gazette*, New Mouse City's most widely read daily newspaper.

Stilton was awarded the Ratitzer Prize for his scoops on *The Curse of the Cheese Pyramid* and *The Search for Sunken Treasure*. He has also received the Andersen 2000 Prize for Personality of the Year. One of his bestsellers won the 2002 eBook Award for world's best ratlings' electronic book. His works have been published all over the globe.

In his spare time, Mr. Stilton collects antique cheese rinds and plays golf. But what he most enjoys is telling stories to his nephew Benjamin.





Map of New Mouse City

- 1. Industrial Zone 24. 2. Cheese Factories 25. 3. Angorat International 26. 27 Airport
- 4. WRAT Radio and **Television Station**
- **Cheese Market**
- 6. Fish Market
- 7. Town Hall
- **Snotnose Castle**
- The Seven Hills of Mouse Island
- 10. Mouse Central Station
- 11. **Trade Center**
- 12. **Movie Theater**
- 13. Gym
- 14. Catnegie Hall
- 15. **Singing Stone Plaza**
- The Gouda Theater 16.
- **Grand Hotel** 17.
- 18. **Mouse General Hospital**
- 19. **Botanical Gardens**
- 20. Cheap Junk for Less (Trap's store)
- 21. **Aunt Sweetfur and** Benjamin's House
- 22. Mouseum of **Modern Art**
- **University and Library** 23.

- The Daily Rat
- The Rodent's Gazette
- **Trap's House**
- **Fashion District**
- 28. The Mouse House Restaurant
- 29. **Environmental** Protection Center
- 30. **Harbor Office**
- 31. **Mousidon Square** Garden
- **Golf Course** 32.
- 33. **Swimming Pool**
- 34. **Tennis Courts**
- 35. **Curlyfur Island Amousement Park**
- Geronimo's House 36.
- **37**. **Historic District**
- 38. **Public Library**
- 39. Shipyard
- 40. Thea's House
- 41. **New Mouse Harbor**
- 42. Luna Lighthouse
- 43. The Statue of Liberty
- 44. **Hercule Poirat's Office**
- 45. **Petunia Pretty Paws's** House
- Grandfather William's 46. House

Dear mouse friends,
Thanks for reading, and farewell
till the next book.

It'll be another whisker-licking-good
adventure, and that's a promise!



Geronimo Stilton



GERONIMO STILTON



THEA



TRAP



BENJAMIN

Who is Geronimo Stilton?

That's me! I run a newspaper, but my true passion is writing adventure stories. Here in New Mouse City, the capital of Mouse Island, my books are all bestsellers! My stories are funny, fa-mouse-ly funny. They are whisker-licking-good tales, and that's a promise!

THE PHANTOM BANDIT

The staff of *The Rodent's Gazette* sent me on a vacation to Cacklefur Castle. But who could relax in such a spooky place? On my first night there I stumbled on a mystery. A phantom was threatening the special pumpkins that grow in the von Cacklefurs' garden! Could I trick the ghost-thief into revealing its identity?





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